

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1, 3-11 and 13-16 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 11 and 16 being the independent claims. Claims 11 and 13-16 are allowed. Amendment is sought to claims 1, 4 and 8-10. Support for these amendments is found, *inter alia*, in the originally-filed claims, in the specification on pp. 7-15, 18, 20 and Figures 3-7. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner objected to the specification stating that "[r]eference is made to priority to a prior International application, however the instant application is the national stage of the referred to International application. Therefore reference to the identical application in the first sentence of the application should be deleted (see MPEP 1893.03(c))." (Paper No. 12, at 2.)

Applicants respectfully traverse this objection. In response to the objection, it is first noted that Applicants did not claim "priority to" the International Application, but indicated that the present application is the National Phase (now amended to "National Stage") of the

International Application. As a second matter, Applicants have amended the specification to perfect the claim to priority. In this amendment, the first paragraph of the specification has been amended to more clearly state the priority claims, to add reference to both the published PCT application and the foreign priority document, and to ensure that the specification conforms with the priority information on the Official Filing Receipt, mailed June 19, 2001, and the Declaration, filed June 6, 2001. Since the amendment ensures that the specification conforms with the Declaration and Official Filing Receipt, this amendment introduces no new matter. In the amended form of the CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS it is appropriate to list the International Application, and is consistent with MPEP 201.11, *inter alia*. Entry of the amendment and reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

Objections to the claims

Claims 1 and 8 were objected to for informalities. (Paper No. 12, at 2.) Applicants thank the Examiner for bringing these informalities to Applicants' attention. The typographical errors in claims 1 and 8 have been corrected. Thus, withdrawal of the objections is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 1 and 3-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which

Applicants regard as the invention. (Paper No. 12, at 2.) Specifically, it is alleged that claims 1 and 3-10 lack sufficient antecedent basis.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. In order to advance prosecution, claims 1 and 3-10 have been amended. Claim 1 has been amended to recite "unconjugated oestriol (uE₃)" in (b), providing antecedent support for claim 1 (c) and subsequent dependent claims 3-10. Claims 9 and 10 have been amended such that the terms "each measured screening marker level" and "the respective screening markers" have been replaced by specific recitation of each level being measured, *i.e.* the measured level of β -human chorionic gonadotrophin (free β -hCG), Inhibin A, and unconjugated oestriol (uE₃). Claims 9 and 10 depend from claims which describe measuring levels of β -human chorionic gonadotrophin (free β -hCG), Inhibin A, and unconjugated oestriol (uE₃).

By amending the claims, there is full antecedent support for all terms. Hence, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Other Matters

The allowance of claims 11 and 13-16 (as indicated under "Disposition of the Claims" of the Office Action Summary) is acknowledged and appreciated by Applicants.

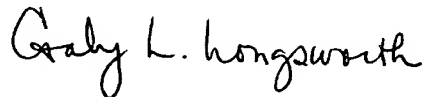
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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